

Claims

1. A process for measuring the performance of an information retrieval system
5 comprising a repository of content items associated with a search mechanism that returns a rank for retrieved content items, said process comprising:
 - when a content item is accessed by a user, recording an appreciation assigned by the user to that content item, wherein the appreciation takes the form of a flag being capable of being set at least positive or not positive;
 - 10 - and using the recorded appreciations to calculate at least a first metric representative of, or derived from, a ratio of positive to non-positive appreciations for the repository and a second metric representing, or derived from, an average rank of the content items when each such content item receive positive appreciations.
- 15 2. A process as claimed in claim 1 comprising storing the appreciations in a database.
3. A process as claimed in claim 1 comprising detecting changes to at least one global metric and launching of a maintenance process of said repository in
20 response to said detected changes.
4. A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the detecting comprises presenting the at least one metric to an administrator via a user interface.
- 25 5. A process as claimed in claim 4 wherein the user interface allows the administrator to initiate a maintenance action.
6. A process as claimed in claim 3 where the maintenance process is initiated automatically.
- 30 7. A process for maintaining a repository of documents having a search engine for outputting lists of documents in response to a query, said process comprising the following steps:

- recording the individual appreciation or flags individually assigned by the users;
- repeatedly computing at least a first and a second metric representative of the relevance of said repository; said first metric being computed from the number of documents having received positive flags from the users and said second metric
- 5 being representative of the average rank of the documents having received positive flags;
- controlling an action brought to said repository in response to a change in said first or said second metrics.

10 8. Process according to claim 7 wherein said first metric is computed as a ratio of the number documents consulted and having received a positive flags versus the total number of documents consulted by the users.

15 9. Process according to claim 7 wherein said second metrics is computed as the average rank within the outputted results for all the documents having received a positive flag.

20 10. Process according to claim 7 comprising presenting a graphical user interface for executing actions on said repository, said graphical user interface displaying said at least first and said second metrics to the user.

25 11. Process according to claim 7 claim wherein said repository of documents is embodied within a stand-alone computer which is connected to a communication network and wherein a transaction with a server is automatically initiated in response to the detection of a change of said at least first and second metrics for the purpose of updating said repository.

30 12. An information retrieval system comprising:
a repository of content items associated with a search mechanism, wherein the search mechanism returns a rank for retrieved content items;
a user interface for presenting a content item to a user and for enabling the user to record an appreciation for that content item in relation to the access of the content item; and

a management element for using the recorded appreciations to calculate at least a first metric representative of, or derived from, a ratio of positive to non-positive appreciations for the repository and a second metric representing, or derived from, an average rank of the content items when each such content item received positive appreciations.

13. An information retrieval system as claimed in claim 12 comprising storing the appreciations in a database.

14. An information retrieval system as claimed in claim 12 wherein the management element is arranged to detect changes to at least one global metric and to launch of a maintenance process of said repository in response to said detected changes.

15. An information retrieval system as claimed in claim 12 comprising a user interface for presenting the at least one metric to an administrator via a user interface.

16. An information retrieval system as claimed in claim 12 wherein the user interface allows the administrator to initiate a maintenance action.

17. An information retrieval system as claimed in claim 12 wherein the maintenance process is initiated automatically.

18. A process for measuring the performance of an information retrieval system comprising a repository of content items associated with a search mechanism that returns a rank for retrieved content items, said process comprising:

- when a content item is accessed by a user, recording an appreciation assigned by the user to that content item, wherein the appreciation takes the form of a flag being capable of being set at least positive or not positive;
- storing the appreciations and the ranks in a database;
- and using the recorded appreciations to calculate at least a first metric representative of, or derived from, a ratio of positive to non-positive appreciations for

the repository and a second metric representing, or derived from, an average rank of the content items when each such content item receive positive appreciations;

- presenting at least one of the metrics to an administrator via a user interface;
- detecting changes to at least one global metric and launching of a maintenance process of said repository in response to said detected changes.

19. A process as claimed in claim 18 where the maintenance process is initiated automatically.

- 10 20. A system for maintaining a repository of documents having a search engine for outputting lists of document in response to a query, said system comprising:
- means for recording appreciations or flags individually assigned by the users;
 - means for computing at least a first and a second metrics representative of the relevance of said repository; said first metrics being computed from the number of documents having received positive flags and said second metrics being representative of the average rank of the documents having received positive flags from the users;
 - means for controlling an action brought to said repository in response to a change brought to said first or said second metrics.

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